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THE LEE LECTURE, 1899

**THE HISTORIC  
SIGNIFICANCE  
OF EPISCOPACY  
IN SCOTLAND**

**1560 - 1690**

BY THE

**REV. H. M. B. REID, B.D.**

**MINISTER OF BALMAGHIE**

**WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS**

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78

# THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF EPISCOPACY IN SCOTLAND.

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## I.

IN the Life of Dr Lee it is stated that he saw the proverbial three courses open in the future of the Scottish Establishment. They were—(1) Presbyterian Reunion; (2) Restoration of full communion with the Church of England; and (3) Ultimate Disestablishment.<sup>1</sup> This was more than thirty years ago, and the issue is not yet clear. In the interval, efforts have been put forth in each of these directions. Three years after Dr Lee's death, the General Assembly appointed a committee on Union. The labours of this Committee proving ineffectual, private conferences ensued in 1893, and were continued at intervals for two years. The result was to show that the non-established members of the conferences were convinced that "the one great hindrance is the ex-

<sup>1</sup> Dr Story's Life, ii. 125.

isting State connection,"<sup>1</sup> and accordingly in 1895 they joined in the most important assault which has yet been made on the Establishment. Presbyterian Reunion therefore depends at present upon Disestablishment, so far as one of the two contracting parties is concerned; and Dr Lee's three courses become practically two. The Church has to choose between Disestablishment followed by the union of Presbyterians, and the restoration of full communion with the sister Establishment. In the latter direction Dr Lee himself took some steps, but it is well-known that the Episcopal Church in Scotland barred the way. That Church is in reality a branch of the Anglican Church planted in Scotland,<sup>2</sup> and if any negotiations have taken place with it since the abortive attempt in 1864, they have not yet been made public, and do not enter into the practical possibilities of the hour. The object of this Lecture is to show that a union with the Church of England, even apart from the Scottish Episcopal communion, would be opposed to the history of our Church and to the rooted instincts of the people.

Throughout the long struggle which began in 1560 and ended in 1690, the Scottish people as a body associated Episcopacy with Romanism. There is reason to think that herein native Scottish shrewdness was in the right, and that sometimes unconsciously, but at other times with a certain degree of intention, the Episcopate was used as a pioneer to

<sup>1</sup> Report of Private Conferences, 1896, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> This is the frankly expressed view of at least one Scottish dignitary—Dean Rorison. See 'Scottish Guardian,' March 31.

clear the way for the re-establishment of a Roman hierarchy.

It will be necessary, in the brief historical sketch now proposed, to deal with several erroneous views which are coming into favour regarding the Reformation in Scotland and the subsequent conflicts between Episcopacy and Presbytery.

It is often, for instance, commented on as a surprising circumstance that the Roman hierarchy should have fallen in 1560 without any perceptible struggle, without striking a blow. This is deemed to be all the more remarkable and puzzling, because the old Church is pictured as having been far from totally corrupt or drowned in ignorance. "On the eve of the Reformation," we are told, "the Church of Scotland could glory in prelates who were equally distinguished for their talents and their virtues. . . . The inferior clergy could also pride itself on many learned and virtuous priests."<sup>1</sup> There had been a distinct movement for reformation within the doomed Church, no less than three councils being held for the purpose between 1549 and 1559. The Church also was in possession of enormous wealth, and her charities, if faithfully used, might well have won popularity and love. Yet, when the crisis came, no voice was lifted up in her defence. In the Parliament of 1560, the bishops allowed the Scots Confession to be ratified without protest. Dr Grub thinks that they did not understand the important issues which were then at stake.<sup>2</sup> But such a view implies the flattest con-

<sup>1</sup> Rev. W. Forbes-Leith in 'Narratives of Scottish Catholics,' p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Grub's Hist., ii. 85.

tradition of the talents of the prelates, whatever scope it may leave for their virtues. Bishop Leslie<sup>1</sup> alleged that the reforming statutes had driven many of the younger priests into the opposition; but this also conveys a dark slur upon the intellectual abilities of the younger clergy, who sought to escape reform by fleeing into the ranks of the strictest Reformers. In the apparent difficulty, we must seek an explanation of a different kind. The view which I venture to submit is, that the prelates had for some years seen that their cause was indefensible, and they concurred in bowing before the storm. They did not, however, simply disappear and leave "not a rack behind." The entire subsequent history of the Church is affected by the presence of Roman or Romanising forces in Scotland. Its troubles, its sudden and violent changes, its final accession to the Revolution, cannot be fully accounted for but by recognising that, from 1560 onward, Romanism, driven under the surface, remained as a disturbing element in the ecclesiastical sphere.

It is unlikely that a Church whose priests were planted all over Scotland, whose abbeys and religious houses and hospitals formed a national system for relief of the poor, and whose holy days and festivals were part and parcel of the life of the peasantry, should have disappeared in so sudden and silent a mode. The seeming completeness of the Reforma-

<sup>1</sup> Hill Burton, iii. 336, note. Bishop Leslie says of the "Statutes" of 1559—"whilk was the principal cause that a great number of the young abbots, priors, deans, and beneficed men assisted to the enterprise and practice devised for the overthrow of the Catholic religion, . . . fearing themselves to be put at according to the laws and statutes."

tion arouses suspicion, since we are not used to see ancient growths uprooted in a moment. What we may naturally expect is a change of form and tactics, by which the defeated party shall try to bring about their reascendancy. Let us therefore look around for the evidence of such a policy, and we may find it in the vicissitudes of the Reformed Church, begun so soon after 1560, and continuing for over a hundred years. The disturbing force may not be called by the name of Rome,—it may even assume the appearance of a violent opposition to Rome; but, whether unconsciously or not, it will perform the functions which belonged of right to the discredited Romish Church.

Another error in regard to this subject is associated with the fortunes of the House of Stuart, which is generally represented as labouring and finally perishing in the cause of a Reformed Episcopacy.<sup>1</sup> Here, also, surprise has often been expressed that such sacrifices should be made for a system of Church government. Why, it has been asked, should the Stuarts have risked their throne in the effort to supplant presbyteries by bishops, and one prayer-book by another? The motive seems inadequate, and the conduct of this royal House takes almost an insane character, as long as it is assumed that they fought a mere battle of mitres and liturgies. The popular history of Scotland becomes perplexing and unsatisfactory upon such a view. Episcopacy

<sup>1</sup> Charles I. "fell a true martyr to the cause of Episcopacy and the Church."—*Rise and Progress of Presbyterianism*, by Rev. G. B. Howard, 1898, p. 87.

may be worth contending for, but surely not to the death :

Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis Tempus eget.

A more adequate view seems to be that the stake was nothing less than the reconciliation of Scotland to Rome, the reconquest of stubborn heretics, the accomplishment of that conversion which the Pope recently hailed as awaiting the Scottish people in the immediate future. It will be my aim to show that the Stuart family were the agents, sometimes unwittingly, but towards the end with open eyes, in a great and admirably persevering scheme to win back Scotland to the Roman obedience. The cause for which they fought was no mere question of ecclesiastical dignities. The banner under which the fight was carried on bore indeed no "strange device" of ultramontane faith; but had the crowning efforts made by James VII. prevailed, Scotland to-day would be all that the Pope's recent letter seems to hope for the twentieth century.

In resisting Episcopacy, the Scottish people were, by a strong native instinct, resisting Popery, which lay behind it. And hence their battle-cry latterly became one against "Popery, Prelacy, and Arbitrary Power." These three forces were bound together, and fell together at the Revolution. Upon this theory, and upon this alone, we are enabled to account for the inbred and undying dislike of the Episcopal system, which has seemed to some observers so irrational and ungrounded. It has been suggested that what the nation rebelled against was

the exercise of the royal prerogative in spiritual matters, and that Episcopacy suffered from its association with tyranny. But the proposition cannot be held in face of facts. The people willingly bowed to the royal decree whenever it went in favour of Presbytery. At the Revolution, William of Orange was accepted as arbiter by both parties in Scotland, and his court was haunted by their representatives. The stories of Carstares and Bishop Rose, whether authentic in their common form or simply well-invented, illustrate at least the fact that the choice lay with the King. The people suspected and disliked Episcopacy not because it came from the Stuarts, to whose family they were warmly attached, but because to them it meant the ultimate restoration of Romanism. Neither Episcopacy alone, nor arbitrary power alone, would have roused them to the white heat of the Covenanting period; it was the dark shadow of Popery standing behind which daunted and maddened them. "Busk, busk, busk him as bonnilie as yie can," said John Davidson of Prestonpans in 1598, when the parliament had agreed to the reintroduction of kirkmen, "and fetche him in as fearlie as yie will, we sie him weel aneuche; we sie the hornes of his Mytre."<sup>1</sup>

The last erroneous view to which I must advert briefly is, that the Scottish devotion to Presbytery was of the nature of fanaticism,<sup>2</sup> and that the triumph

<sup>1</sup> Melville's Diary, p. 289 (Bannatyne Club, 1829).

<sup>2</sup> Even the Duke of Argyll says: "To meet this" (the cry of the divine right of Bishops) "a counter-fanaticism was required."—*Presbytery Examined*, 1847, p. 157.



of Presbytery came through the accidental preponderance of a fanatical party. This is an extremely popular theory in some quarters at the present time but it is on a par with the theory (lately developed in full detail by Dr Blunt<sup>1</sup>) that the English Establishment owes its deliverance from Popery to the charms of Anne Boleyn. According to certain historians, the learning, culture, and rank of Scotland always regarded Episcopacy as perfectly lawful; at the Revolution, we are told, the majority of the people were quite contented with it; but the imperious policy of Laud, the excesses of the Covenanters in the latter years of Charles II., the tyranny of James VII., and finally the obstinate loyalty of the Scottish bishops in 1689, kept the flames of fanaticism in a glow, and forced a Presbyterian establishment upon the country. If Laud had gone about his task more cautiously, if the Resolutioners had gained the upper hand, if the Toleration of 1687 had come sooner and enjoyed fair-play, and if after the Revolution the Episcopalians had only given the new king their support,—then we should have had an Episcopal Establishment to-day in Scotland. The ultimate result was the product of a series of unfortunate accidents, not the climax of a long conscientious struggle for Presbyterian order and government. Such reasoning has found favour with the Episcopalian historians and advocates, but not with them alone. Not a few Presbyterians, among whom are some deserving of respect for learning and high character, have occasionally been heard to lament

<sup>1</sup> Reformation of the Church of England, i. 198.

the persistent ill-luck which dogged the Episcopal Church in Scotland. The saintly life and amiable manners of Leighton have lent a charm to the thought of what might have been if only his obstinate presbyters had listened favourably to his scheme of a modified Episcopacy. And contrasted with him, these unbending presbyters are apt to appear in an unlovely light. A fashion also has grown up, of saying—"We are in the Establishment not because it is Presbyterian, but because it is National." Granting due respect to every worthy advocate of this position, there remains our duty to the historical facts. In the course of this paper it will more or less appear that the demand for Presbytery came from Scotland's best sons; that a growing and enlightened distrust of Episcopacy prompted it; that it was based on the highest grounds, and could not be abandoned without dishonour; and that its final concession was no political accident, but the outcome of Protestant forces which had attained an overwhelming ascendancy.

## II.

From the Reformation to the Revolution the real issue was not Presbytery *versus* Prelacy, but Protestantism *versus* Popery.<sup>1</sup> But at an early stage

<sup>1</sup> Dr C. G. M'Crie says of the "English Revolution," "To the ecclesiastic the issues at stake were those of Episcopacy and Presbytery *versus* Popery."—*Scotland's Part and Place in the Revolution of 1688*, p. 208.

of the conflict it became clear to the Scottish Reformers that the interests of the Reformation were bound up with the Presbyterian system, and that Prelacy had inherent Popish tendencies. It is a significant fact that Knox himself had made trial of the Anglican Church. He had even been a royal chaplain, and had been offered more than one English bishopric. But he ended by returning to his native land and throwing his weight into the scale against the Episcopal system. The First Book of Discipline, which unquestionably came largely from his mind, contains no mention of an order of bishops. The superintendents provided for in his scheme were in no distinctive sense bishops at all. They were not consecrated by other bishops, they did not confer orders, they were subject to the control of the presbyters of each province, and they were proposed as a temporary expedient.<sup>1</sup> Towards the close of his life Knox accepted the Concordat of Leith, and even drew up articles suggesting how the bishops should be appointed and their revenues supervised. This has led Hill Burton to remark that "those who hold that Knox was an enemy to an episcopal hierarchy" ought to study these articles.<sup>2</sup> But it is more important to study the Concordat itself, from which it is clear that the titular bishops were only *magni nominis umbra*. It is true that they were elected by the chapter under the great seal; but beyond this the analogy to the Anglican bishops abruptly ceases. They received no episcopal con-

<sup>1</sup> First Book of Discipline, c. vi.

<sup>2</sup> History, v. 79.

secration, and they were as completely amenable to the General Assembly as any presbyter. They did not form an "episcopal hierarchy" so much as a fiscal committee, Knox's evident design being to secure by a legal process the ample revenues of the episcopal sees, and to apply them to religious uses. It was an expedient not unknown in modern ecclesiastical practice, as for example where a Free Church Session meets annually under the name of Reformed Presbyterian, in order to receive certain payments destined to the latter. Knox never consented, and never would have consented, to the introduction of a prelacy of the "true Roman breed."<sup>1</sup> But he longed to see the Reformed religion decently provided for, and the sacred endowments saved from "the merciless devourers of the patrimony of the Church." The new bishops were to be tried by the Assembly, whom he implored to suffer no "unworthy men to be thrust into the ministry of the Church." It is clear that his design was to have trustworthy ministers elected to the titular bishoprics, so that the revenues might pass safely through their hands into those of the impoverished clergy.

The experiment was perhaps worthy of a trial, but it speedily brought about its own condemnation, and led in turn to the most emphatic declaration of Presbyterian principles. The titular bishops dated from the year 1572, and they had hardly entered upon their office when a great wave of Protestant

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham's Church Hist., i. 346. The Baird Lecture of the late Professor Mitchell for this year throws fresh light on Knox's position.

feeling swept over the country, chiefly in consequence of the massacre of St Bartholomew. A Protestant Convention met in Edinburgh in October 1572, and was followed by strict measures against Papists and by equally strict dealing with the new bishops. The latest historian of Scottish Episcopacy sees no connection between these two processes, and asserts that, whereas "from 1560 to 1572 the struggle was between Romanism and Protestantism," the "struggle for the next hundred years was between Episcopacy and Presbytery."<sup>1</sup> But there was surely more than coincidence in the fact that Andrew Melville's "warfare against pseudo-episcopacy," as he himself styled it, was waged during a time of new activity on the part of the Romanists. The Society of Jesus had been at work in Scotland eighteen years before the papal jurisdiction was abolished in 1560; and they cherished at this very time strong hopes of regaining the country to their faith. Almost at the moment when Melville was writing to Beza, "We have now for five years maintained a warfare against pseudo-episcopacy," Father Hay was landing in Dundee, and immediately there appeared in several far-distant quarters marked signs of a Romish revival. The General Assembly of 1580 met in Dundee a few months after Father Hay's arrival, and deposed the bishops not only from their special office, but from the holy ministry itself. It adopted the Second Book of Discipline, from which all traces of Episcopacy were carefully removed. These events took place amid a storm of anti-Popish feeling so violent

<sup>1</sup> W. Stephen's *Hist. of the Scot. Church*, vol. ii. 1896, p. 102.

that the Government issued a manifesto, known as the "King's Confession," condemning the "Roman antichrist," and the "erroneous and bloody decrees of Trent"; and this was ordered to be signed by all persons. It is an insufficient appreciation of these facts which describes them as arising from a mere matter of titles or offices. The true reading of history is, that the Episcopate was already suspected, and Presbytery was being gradually developed as the national bulwark against Popery.

The controversy between Archbishop Adamson and Andrew Melville at this time deserves careful study, and sheds light on the whole situation. Adamson was of the Anglican party, and had spent some months in England in a sort of private conferences with the English prelates regarding the Scottish Church. Amid the usual arguments for and against Episcopacy and Presbytery respectively, it is significant for our present purpose to note that each charged the other with Popish principles. Adamson accused Melville of claiming the papal "power of the keys" for his presbyteries; Melville retorted that Adamson was setting up a new pope in the form of bishops holding office of the king.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the merits of the dispute, therefore, it is plain that the underlying question was concerning Popery. At a later date Adamson was excommunicated by the General Assembly for his Popish leanings. How the people at large viewed the matter is probably to be judged from the king's famous speech in the Assembly of

<sup>1</sup> Calderwood, iv. 254 *sqq.*

1590, describing the Church as "the sincerest [purest] Kirk in the world," and adding, "As for our neighbour Kirk in England, it is an evil-said mass in English, wanting nothing but the liftings." When the formal recognition of Presbyterian Church government took place in 1592, it was accompanied by severe legislation against Jesuits, masses, and mass-priests.

It is commonly alleged that King James VI. from an early age had a deep dislike to Presbyterianism, and that such speeches as the above were merely specimens of the "kingcraft" in which he gloried. Considering his ancestry, it seems just as likely that his true sympathies were with the Church of his mother.<sup>1</sup> The execution of that unfortunate queen made a deep impression upon his mind unfavourable to Protestantism itself; and when he was asked by Spain to grant harbourage to the Armada and to join the Spanish forces in crushing Elizabeth, he actually dallied with the proposal, and was only brought to an adverse decision by the rising Protestant spirit in his own kingdom.<sup>2</sup> If the king's guiding motive was to assure his succession to the English crown, it might well seem to his mind in 1588 that the way would be easier through Romish allies than by the Reformed interest. That his leanings were decidedly towards Prelacy he was never able to conceal; and his pro-

<sup>1</sup> "Though brought up a Protestant, he manifested no antipathy to the religion of his mother."—*The Church in Scotland, 1070 to 1560*, by R. Morris Stewart.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham's *Hist.*, i. 385,

testations themselves increase our suspicions. As late as 1598 he added to his previous speech regarding the Anglican Church the specific statement, surely a crowning example of Jesuitical expression, "I wish not to bring in Papistical or Anglican bishops." At that very time the 'Basilikon Doron' was locked up in his drawer, only to be dragged out under popular compulsion. What the nature of this royal book was may be gathered from the fact that Spottiswood declares that its publication smoothed the king's way to the English throne, it may be presumed by gratifying the large Roman Catholic population in England. Melville described its most offensive statements as "Anglo-papistical propositions." As the day of his accession drew near with Elizabeth's failing health, King James betrayed more openly his leanings toward the Roman party. He committed the Princess Elizabeth to the care of Lady Livingston, who was a Papist; and he was accused upon very good grounds of writing a letter to the Pope, proposing to send an ambassador to the Papal Court.

When in 1603 the two crowns were united, and James removed his Court to London, he threw off at once the slight disguise which he had hitherto retained, and by the year 1610 he had succeeded in restoring Episcopacy in a distinctly Anglican form. Spottiswood, Lamb, and Hamilton were all consecrated in London, and they in turn consecrated the remaining members of the Episcopate. The new bishops, however, still lacked an important attribute to place them on an equality with the old prelates.



They were made subject to the censure of the General Assembly. It has been thought noticeable that the Scottish people submitted quietly to the new order of things; but there are plain and abundant reasons. There was no great leading spirit, like Knox or Melville, to give voice to their convictions; the might of England, now at the king's command, overawed the people; and last but not least, the Church remained practically Presbyterian, since it retained its presbyteries under the old name of the "weekly exercise," and its synods with the bishops as permanent moderators, and above both synods and bishops the General Assembly wielding supreme spiritual power. "Notwithstanding the changes which were in progress, the machinery of Presbyterianism was still in full working order. Synods and presbyteries were superintending the local interests of the Church, and kirk-sessions were ruling congregations."<sup>1</sup> In spite of the rescinding of the charter of 1592, the Church retained its Presbyterian character, and the sympathies of the great body of the people were with Presbyterian order. The proof of this latter statement is that the bishops from the first were extremely unpopular, and never made any substantial progress in the affections of their flocks. This is sometimes ascribed to their manner of appointment by virtue of the royal prerogative, which, says Dr Stephen of Dunbarton, "is the key to the chequered history of Scottish Epis-

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham's Church Hist., i. 474; Stephen's Hist. of Scot. Church, ii. 196.

copacy, as it was the main cause of its unpopularity.”<sup>1</sup> But this amounts to an assertion that the king himself was unpopular, whereas in point of fact he was received with the greatest honour when he visited Scotland and its capital in 1617. It was not the king’s authority which the people disliked, but the intrusion of Anglican bishops, and of modes of worship associated with the Roman Church.

The restoration of Episcopacy was the signal for a revival of Romanism, by a law which can be seen operating all through this period. The alleged persecution of Papists, when closely examined, is found to consist chiefly in severe enactments on paper. The Assembly of 1616, for example, made some stringent regulations to check the growth of Popery, but the execution of such laws lay with the Courts of High Commission, which were practically the courts of the Archbishops of St Andrews and Glasgow. The Five Articles of Perth, forced upon an unwilling Assembly in 1618, showed a distinct movement towards Romanism. The Romanising character of these Articles has, as a rule, been overlooked in recent works, and it is usual to assert that private sacraments and the observance of the great Christian festivals are now regarded by Presbyterians as perfectly lawful. But the Five Articles must be taken as a whole, not dealt with singly and in an abstract manner. Viewed thus, they meant for Scottish people the restoration of the Mass and

<sup>1</sup> History, ii. 207.

its worship; the restoration of the Viaticum,<sup>1</sup> a part of the Roman sacrament of extreme unction; the restoration of Holy Days associated with the Mass; and the restoration of the Roman sacrament of Confirmation, and the possible revival of Confession and Absolution in private when the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist were administered. The most obnoxious of the Articles was that which required kneeling to receive the Holy Communion, since it brought back in the most vivid way the ceremonial of the Mass, which Knox had trained his hearers to fear more than the landing of ten thousand armed enemies. In fairness to our ancestors, we must admit that this supreme act of James's government gave them ground to suspect and distrust the Episcopal system, as being simply a disguised form of Romanism.

In passing now to the Caroline period, we find the signs growing clearer that Episcopacy and Romanism rose and fell together in Scotland, and that Presbytery was the true Protestant force counter-acting Romanism by resisting Episcopacy. From this point I shall avail myself largely of Miss Kinloch's recent volume,<sup>2</sup> as well as of Mr Howard's learned and admirably concise sketch of the history of Presbyterianism.<sup>3</sup> Charles I., at his marriage with Henrietta Maria of France, signed a secret agreement to give greater religious freedom to Scottish Catho-

<sup>1</sup> Calderwood, recording James's death in 1625, says he "tooke his viaticum after the English fashion."—History, vii. 633.

<sup>2</sup> Studies in Scottish Ecclesiastical History, 1898.

<sup>3</sup> Rise and Progress of Presbyterianism. By Rev. George Broadley Howard, B.A. 1898.

lics. Charles II., under the marriage contract, was educated by his mother up to his thirteenth year, and there can be little doubt that both he and his brother James were bred up to that age as Catholics. Charles himself died a Roman Catholic. His restoration of Episcopacy was a step towards the restoration of Popery. Miss Kinloch makes a slight attempt to show that Scottish Episcopacy, in the years from 1660 to 1685, was as unfriendly to Rome as Presbytery itself; indeed she professes her inability to understand wherein Episcopacy and Presbytery differed from the doctrinal point of view, and declares that Laud's Liturgy, the occasion of the storm in 1637, was a "hidden denial of the Eternal Truth," and taught a veiled Zwinglianism. "Down with the altar! death to the mass-priest!" was "the common battle-cry of Episcopalians and Presbyterians." The answer to this is that every one of the bishops in 1638 was charged with Popery,<sup>1</sup> and that the National Covenant was mainly a renewal of the protest against Popery made in 1580, within twenty years of the Reformation. Laud's Liturgy may be Zwinglian, but it was hailed with cries of "They are bringing in Popery among us! The Mass is entered among us!"<sup>2</sup> The second Episcopacy did not escape the suspicion of Romanism any more than the first. Leighton himself had been trained partly at Douai, and Gordon, the last Caroline Bishop of Galloway, became a Roman priest in his exile. The "curates" of the Covenanting times bore a name unfamiliar

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham's Hist., ii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Kinloch, p. 37.

to the people,<sup>1</sup> and were suspected of Popish leanings. Nor is it correct to say that the Episcopalians showed equal hostility to the Papists. The administration of Charles II. was distinctly friendly to them, and Father Leslie reported to Propaganda that "after the Restoration for about twenty years there was no remarkable persecution of Catholics on the score of religion." He further recorded the fact that in 1679 there were no less than 14,000 Catholics in Scotland, the entire population being probably under half a million. In other words, about 3 per cent of the Scottish people were open Catholics, being very nearly the proportion of Episcopalians at the present day.<sup>2</sup>

The progress thus made in the time of Charles II. was continued and quickened at his death. James VII. was an undisguised Catholic, and he began in England and Scotland alike a vigorous Romanising policy.<sup>3</sup> In Scotland the results soon appeared. In 1686 the Lord High Commissioner and the Lord Chancellor had both been perverted. An attempt was made to induce the Scottish Parliament to pass a Toleration Act, and when this failed, the Royal prerogative was used to grant freedom of worship to the Catholics. The Chapel of Holyroodhouse was fitted up for Popish rites, a school was started there

<sup>1</sup> Curate is the "ordinary term for the *beneficed* priest in the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer."—Howard, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> On Laud's Liturgy, see Professor Mitchell's Introduction to 'Minutes of Westminster Assembly,' p. xxvii, note, where he clearly states the above position, that it was the Roman character of the new book which "united the nation almost as one man against it."

<sup>3</sup> Howard, p. 139.

under Jesuit teachers, and a printing-press was set to work. "Wise Catholics," says Miss Kinloch of this period, "beheld, with hopes marred by misgivings, his [James's] wild audacities."<sup>1</sup>

At this crisis there was no hope for Protestantism in the Scottish Episcopalian Church. It was the Presbyterians who saved Scotland from being delivered over anew to Rome, and among the Presbyterians it is what has been called the Extreme Left—the Covenanters and Cameronians—who deserve the chief credit. But for them, there would have been no effectual resistance to the king's plans, which represent the last stages in a process that had been going on ever since the Reformation, a patient and far-seeing design to win back the Scots to the Roman obedience. In this great scheme Episcopacy was the bridge thrown over the gulf between Protestant and Romanist. Some had already crossed it: a large part of the people had undoubtedly entered upon it with perfect goodwill: a still larger section, I believe, had been coerced by fear into the Episcopal Church. But there remained a section, small indeed but undaunted, whom fear could not corrupt, and hence a shameful violence had to be used. Out of all his Scottish subjects James VII. excepted the Cameronians alone from his Toleration in 1687, while he included Quakers and Papists. Of late there has appeared a tendency to disparage the Cameronians,

<sup>1</sup> Kinloch, p. 231. Dalrymple in his 'Memoirs' says that the Pope, Innocent XI., opposed this headlong policy. See Dr Story's 'Car-stares,' p. 142; Kinloch, p. 235; Dalrymple's 'Memoirs,' part i. bk. iv.

and to suggest that it would have been well for them and for Scotland if they had accepted the Indulgence as the moderate Presbyterians did. Nothing could be more unjust and ungrateful than such an opinion, since it was the irreconcilable attitude of these men which forced the king's hand, and demonstrated his Romanising designs.

On the eve of the Revolution the cause of Protestantism was upheld by the outlawed and despised Covenanters. They, and they alone, remained staunch. And they alone were persecuted in any real or active form. They were shot down in the fields, they were exiled and sold as slaves, their women were threatened with drowning and two at least were actually drowned, their houses were pillaged, and their cattle driven off. Miss Kinloch, however, says : " The Covenanters suffered long and grievously, but in the day of their brief power they had been the first to make others suffer, and to act not only with bloody cruelty but with the meanest treachery ; therefore, although their conduct formed no excuse for that of their enemy, we cannot extend to them the same commiseration they would have called forth had they exhibited meekness, piety, and humility."<sup>1</sup> But there is no foundation for the

<sup>1</sup> Kinloch, pp. 163, 164. If the reference is to the slaughter of a company of Irish infantry at Philiphaugh, 13th September 1645, the facts are these : A hundred of Montrose's *Irish* infantry surrendered to Leslie on condition that their lives should be spared. But it was not in Leslie's power to grant such terms, since by a martial law of both kingdoms all Irish rebels found in arms were to be shot. They richly deserved it by their atrocities committed under Montrose's command at Aberdeen, Kilsyth, and Inverlochy. At Kilsyth at least 5000 Coven-

charge of bloody cruelty. There is no instance of human life being taken under the Presbyterian government. All that we hear of is "threatenings, beating, tearing of the clothes, drawing of the blood, and exposing to thousands of injuries and reproaches"—in other words, ordinary horse-play by the mob.<sup>1</sup> When the king's 'Large Declaration' was before the General Assembly of 1639, the fiery Cant said, "Hanging of the author should prevent [precede] all other censure." But the Moderator quietly replied, "That punishment is not in the hands of kirkmen." No doubt the "rascall multitude" did the usual quantity of mischief, destroying Popish buildings, furniture, and vestments; and under the penal laws a priest or two were confined in the Edinburgh Tol-

anters were slain, no quarter being given, while Aberdeen was delivered up for four days to the fiendish passions of these wild Irish soldiers. It is alleged that the ministers induced Leslie to break his promise, but this charge rests on partisan evidence. The most probable view seems to be that they drew his attention to the nationality and crimes of the prisoners. "What can be more preposterous than to gloat, as some writers have done, with evident delight over the massacre of *six thousand* trembling fugitives after the battle of Kilsyth—a feat which Montrose and his savages accomplished in their shirts, with 'the sleeves tucked up, like a butcher going to kill cattle'; and yet to affect the utmost horror at the military and judicial execution of some two or three hundred rebels, chiefly Irish, taken with arms in their hands, and reeking with the blood of our countrymen."—M'Crie's 'Sketches,' ii. 16; he refers to Napier's 'Montrose,' ii. 422-473.

As regards the comparative toleration used by Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Professor Masson admits that Scottish Presbyterians and Puritans were more tolerant than the Episcopalians *prior to 1640* ('Life of Milton,' vol. iii.); and Professor Mitchell gives particulars to show that in the years following, up to the Restoration, the Presbyterians and Independents really relaxed the laws against heresy and blasphemy (see 'Introduction to Westminster Minutes,' pp. lxxii-lxxiv, note).

<sup>1</sup> Kinloch, p. 45.



booth, and one (Father John Mambrecht) was sentenced to be hanged. But he never was hanged. No one was hanged, beheaded, or drowned for being a Papist during the ascendancy of the Covenanters. How comfortably a priest could live in Scotland under the Romanising Stuarts may be seen from the narrative of Father Blakhal, who for five years (1638-1642) was domestic chaplain at Aboyne Castle. He preached, visited, and celebrated openly; had his own chamber, and "four dishes of meat was the least that was sent to me at any meal, with ale and wine conforme." The only sufferings likely to befall the genial Father were those arising from indigestion. We have seen that there was a practical immunity granted to Roman Catholics from 1660 onwards, and that persecution concentrated itself finally upon those who refused to make any terms with a Romanising Government, the Covenanters, or rather the strictest party among them, the Cameronians.

All through this "strange eventful history" the royal house of Stuart was the instrument employed to mould Scottish religion anew into the Roman form. The advance from stage to stage is not to be denied by a candid observer. James VI. was bred a Presbyterian, but died a Prelatist. Charles I. is the type of a High-Church Anglican. Charles II. was a concealed Papist; James VII. was an open one. Every one of the line strove to subdue the Scottish people to Prelacy, and the last one deliberately employed it as the stepping-stone to Popery. It is in the reign of James VII. that the issue in the whole conflict is at last laid bare. No one can

question the glaring fact that in 1685 Scottish Episcopacy had become little better than the *locum tenens* of the Pope.

On the other hand, from point to point, we see the Presbyterian party growing in their convictions that the purity of religion can only be secured under Presbyterian forms. It has been said that Knox held Episcopacy to be lawful but not expedient; Melville went further, and declared it to be neither lawful nor expedient; and Rutherford and Gillespie met the divine-right Episcopacy of Laud by a divine-right Presbyterianism, of which the Cameronians became the martyrs and confessors. This was no mere battle of names and offices; it was the immemorial struggle between Roman traditionalism and the Protestant appeal to Scripture. And it was not to be decided by questions of policy or numbers. Scotland loved the Stuarts, but she finally disowned them because they were driving her back to Rome. The staunch Protesters were in a minority, yet they did not cease to testify against the Romanising movement. When the crisis came, their long and bitter patience had its reward. They had kept alive the national dislike of hierarchical forms, and thousands who had conformed to these for a time, under coercion or in despair, rallied to the standard of Presbytery and joined in its triumph.

The Revolution of 1688 was a distinctly Protestant movement. In a contemporary diary<sup>1</sup> we find the situation thus summarised: "*Leyden, Dies Dom.*, Oct. 3, 1688.—The work now in hand is certainly

<sup>1</sup> Diary of Colonel William Maxwell of Cardoness, 1685-1697, p. 161.

very great. Some of the princes of this part of the world are now setting themselves in opposition to the designs of these two kings, of England and France, brethren of the Jesuits' Society, who are confederate together for to ruin the Protestant interest in this part of the world. What the last has done already in extirpating (contrair to the most solemn engagements) the many hundreds and thousands of Protestants that were in France, and was likewise the instrument of extirpating all that were in the Valleys of Piedmont (a Church which has continued since Christ Jesus was in the world and the holy apostles)—is known to the whole world. What the first has done is likewise evident—how by degrees he has introduced Popery into Britain, advanced Papists, both contrair to all law; endeavoured to have all laws dissolved that stood for the security of the Protestant interest; and then, how he, wanting children of his own that would advance Popery, has, contrair to natural affection and all the principles of humanity, exposed himself to the shame of the world by bringing in a supposititious child to be heir to so great a crown, and deprive his own lawful children who are zealous Protestants. After all these endeavours and many more, if an appearing for the Protestant interest that is now so very low . . . be not lawful, what can be lawful?" The writer of this passage was a Presbyterian gentleman who had suffered imprisonment for attending conventicles, and had gone, like so many more, into a voluntary exile in Holland. His views are a fair statement of the opinions of anti-prelatists at the time. Without discussing the

question of the Pretender's legitimacy, it may be pointed out that the Protestant feeling of this critical period was entirely on the Presbyterian side, so far as Scotsmen were involved. Scottish Episcopacy was deep-dyed in subservience to the king's undoubted Romanising designs. The last articulate sound from the Scottish bishops shows how pliant a tool they would have been in working out these designs. They wished him "the hearts of his subjects and the necks of his enemies," although they knew that these enemies were the champions of Protestantism.

William's assumption of the supreme power set up new currents of feeling in Scotland, and these were duly transmitted to his Court. Carstares was there already, and Bishop Rose had arrived in December 1688. What followed is usually described in such a way as to suggest that King William had an open mind, and would lean to the side which offered most support to his Government; and accordingly all the historians repeat Bishop Rose's own story of the first interview with the new king, and its abrupt ending. The incident is well told, and has a certain romantic charm; but its importance has been most unduly magnified. Writers favourable to Episcopacy concur in suggesting that the bishop's refusal to promise support to the king marked the turning-point in the fortunes of the Scottish hierarchy. "The bishop," says one writer, "had gone far to seal the fate of the Episcopal establishment."<sup>1</sup> "In Scotland," says another, "William would certainly have left the bishops and clergy in possession, had they promised him

<sup>1</sup> Stephen, ii. 410.

their support.”<sup>1</sup> “It seems pretty certain,” says our own Cunningham, “that he was at first inclined to use his influence for the preservation of the hierarchy.”<sup>2</sup> It has been a favourite taunt against the Church of Scotland that she purchased her triumph by political services to the Prince of Orange, by something like treason or rebellion against the lawful king; while the Episcopate has been painted as suffering for its steadfast loyalty to apostolic order and legitimate monarchy. Upon the other side is a story almost as detailed and dramatic, which seems to have been generally overlooked. The Rev. Patrick Warner, a Presbyterian exile at The Hague, accepted a call to the town of Irvine in 1687, when the Toleration was proclaimed, and before sailing he is said to have had an interview with the Prince of Orange. Toward the close Mr Warner said: “We are, indeed, a poor, persecuted people, and have none under God to look to for help and relief but your Royal Highness and your Princess, on account of your near relation to the Crown.” The Prince answered: “I was educated a Protestant, and I hope to continue one; and I assure you, if ever it be in my power, I shall make the Presbyterian Church-government the established Church-government of that nation; and of this you may likewise assure your friends.”<sup>3</sup> Such a narrative seems to

<sup>1</sup> Howard, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, ii. 158. See also Dr Cook’s ‘History,’ ii. 440, where this view is stated very emphatically; and compare Dr M’Crie, ‘Scotland’s Part and Place,’ p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> See, for the whole incident, Wodrow’s ‘Sufferings of the Church,’ iv. 436 (Burns’ edition).

reflect the true facts of the case, which were that William came over practically pledged to maintain the Protestant cause in Scotland through the Presbyterian party; that his bias was distinctly and overwhelmingly towards that side; and that the maintenance of Episcopacy, for political considerations, would have been an act of treachery and dishonour. It would, in short, have implied an abandonment of the Protestant interest in Scotland, which had suffered and done so much to resist the progress of Popery.

Upon such a broad view, it would have mattered little if even the Presbyterians had been in a minority, as they were in England; because William owed his first duty at any cost to the Protestant party, and that was undoubtedly the party of Presbytery. Those who labour, therefore, to show that the Scottish people were as a body Episcopalian in 1688, seem to me to miss the point. Let us suppose that the people had been predominantly Roman Catholic at that crisis, still we cannot conceive any offers of support from the Catholic party being open to William's acceptance. He was bound in honour to give his weight to the Protestants. And the Episcopal leaders had no valid claim to that title. But it has never been proved that the Presbyterians were a minority; on the contrary, the indications we possess go to prove that Episcopacy, though imposed for twenty-seven years with all the force of law and penalties, had never been more than a temporary yoke on the necks of the people. Such indications are, the continuance of the ordinary ecclesiastical discipline, the almost universal prevalence of Presbyterian forms of

worship, the absence of any popular demonstration on the Episcopal side in 1688, and the overwhelming majority against Episcopacy in the National Convention of 1689. Dr Grub has well and shortly described the situation when he says that the bishops were rather "the chief ecclesiastical officers of the sovereign, than the divinely constituted rulers of the Church."<sup>1</sup> Episcopacy was, up to its fall, an external and alien element in Scottish religious life. It might be said, looking at the violence used in maintaining its illusive ascendancy, that Episcopacy was a "wall of fire" round about the Church, but never a "glory in the midst of her."

In weighing the arguments for and against the above view, it is surely fair to give the greatest weight to the declarations of representative bodies like the Convention and the Parliament. The Convention declared that "Prelacy and the superiority of any office in the Church above Presbyters" was "contrary to the inclination of the generality of the people," and that it had been a "great and unsupportable grievance and burden to this nation." The significance of the further expressions deserves notice: it was stated that the people had been in the same mind "ever since the Reformation," and the reason given for this persistent dislike of Episcopacy is that they had "reformed from Popery by Presbyters." There could not be a clearer or more exact statement of the fact that, historically, Presbytery had been, and continued to be, endeared to the Scottish people at large because they associated it with Reforming principles; while Episcopacy was corre-

<sup>1</sup> Grub, iii. 216.

spondingly disliked because its associations and tendencies were Popish. The Scottish Parliament of 1689 was practically the same body as the Convention, but it gave even more emphatic testimony to the state of the country by formally abolishing Episcopacy, and providing that the Church government was to be settled "in the way most agreeable to the inclinations of the people." There could be no doubt what the "inclinations of the people" were, and it is in the highest degree unhistorical to describe the question of Church-government as being left open. The language of the Claim of Right must be taken along with that of the Parliament, and used to interpret its meaning. There was no loophole left for the restoration of Episcopacy. Presbytery had already been designated as the true Protestant vehicle, to which the generality of Scotsmen were vehemently attached. Episcopacy had in the same breath been condemned as insupportable, and formally abolished. The Settlement provided for in the Act of Parliament took place in 1690, and was the mathematical deduction from these data. It must be regarded as the Magna Charta not merely of the Scottish Church, but of Scottish Protestantism. It marks in Scotland the spring-tide of the Reformation, which in England ran less full and strong, and failed to submerge the beaten tracks of Popery.

### III.

It remains to apply these lessons of our history to the present time, and no great space need be filled in doing so. If the historical associations of Episcopacy



have continuously shown a Romanising character, and if they have from stage to stage been met by the assertion of Presbyterian principles, it will follow that any minimising or abandonment of the latter would be unjustifiable at the present day. There are many signs that we are on the eve of a great reaction to Popery, and it is not to prelatic quarters that we must look for comfort and help. Doubtless there is a certain charm in the idea of the two national Churches standing by each other against Disestablishment. But Disestablishment should be less formidable to us than Popery. We are Protestants first, and National Churchmen only second. Our Catholicism is not, and never has been, a Catholicism of Christendom, but a Catholicism of the Reformed Churches. We ought not, therefore, to seek alliances where the principles of the Reformation are seriously endangered, if not actually laid aside. What is perhaps most needed by Scotsmen is a revived interest and faith in the Reformed teaching, by which our fathers overthrew the Romish system so completely. Instead of treating Presbyterianism as a thing indifferent, and thus throwing open a door to Prelacy, with its inveterate tendencies towards Rome, we should perhaps be wiser to revert to the high ground of the divine right and scriptural authority of our Church system ; to take our stand there with Melville, Rutherford, Gillespie, and Rule ; and to await the rallying of Scottish Presbyterian forces around that ancient standard. Presbyterian reunion, with enlarged Catholic sympathies toward the Reformed Churches of the world, seems to be the true Protestant policy

at the present time. If it can be attained without Disestablishment, so much the better for our religious interests. But in the face of a Romish reaction, even Disestablishment cannot release us from the duty of pitching our camp, and marshalling our forces, upon the side of Presbytery, as being the historic champion of Scottish religion.

There is a remarkable passage in one of Principal Tulloch's letters, written at the time when there was some idea of effecting a union between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopalians. "The deepest influence of all," he says, "has been the decay of faith in any divine form of Church government at all, in the old dogmatic sense. This is the real root of the present movement in our Church."<sup>1</sup> The words point out a defect in our ecclesiastical character, but it is to be met not by a surrender to Episcopacy, but by maintaining the divine commission of our Presbyterian ministry. There are indications in our midst that the decay of faith alleged by the Principal is being arrested, and may be entirely checked. Professor Hastie's recent weighty appeal<sup>2</sup> for a more elaborate study of the Reformed theology marks an epoch in our history; for such a study must pour a flood of light on the true issue between Presbytery and Episcopacy.

A writer on the Anglican side concludes his work by asking: "Can Knox and Melville and other eminent Fathers of the system have been led astray on so momentous a question? Can our eloquent

<sup>1</sup> Tulloch's *Life*, p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> *Theology as Science*,—see especially pp. 65, 103, 104.

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divines, our learned scholars, our influential leaders in Church and State, have acquiesced in a position that is untenable; seeing that, if it be so, to maintain it would be trifling with the gravest matters of religion?"<sup>1</sup> To these questions Scottish history gives an answer, by showing that Presbyterianism in its best days burned with as deep a faith in its divine authority as the most exalted Anglicanism; and that it was the providential instrument of preserving our country from the sway of unscriptural opinions and forms. That faith may have decayed in some periods, and in some quarters, of the Church. In the Church at large it has always been dormant, never dead; and perhaps the hour has come for the awakening. The growing claims of Romanism must be met. In broad Scotland, there is no Church with a more valid right or a more certain duty to appear as the defender of Protestantism than the Church of Knox and Melville. In the vista of the future, the one path that shines out clearly leads us among those who, however divided for the moment by internal differences, are our ecclesiastical kin, and one with us in the unity of the Reformed Catholic Church.

<sup>1</sup> Howard, p. 195.













